

Leaves of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) may be granted for personal and/or medical reasons.

Leave of Absence: Graduate students may request a LOA from a program through a written statement to their program director who will forward the request to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education for processing. Leaves of absence must be requested and approved before or during the first term of leave. Requests for retroactive LOA will not be approved. Students on a LOA will not be supported by VCU funds or funds arranged by VCU.

Medical Leave of Absence: If a student's health condition impedes their academic progress, a student may request a medical leave of absence from a program for a designated period of time through a written statement to their program director who will forward the request to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education for processing. The student should also provide a letter from the licensed health care provider who is treating them. This letter should provide the reason for and duration of the leave. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education – in conjunction with the relevant Program – will establish any additional conditions that apply to the leave. Students on a medical LOA will not be supported by VCU funds or funds arranged by VCU.

If the LOA or medical LOA request is approved, the student's academic record will reflect a grade of W for all enrolled courses during that term. Tuition and fees are charged in the same manner as other withdrawals. Students should consult the Office of Financial Aid to understand the potential impact of a LOA, medical LOA or withdrawal from courses on their academic progress and future financial aid.

Graduate students with an approved LOA or medical LOA are exempt from continuous enrollment requirements for the LOA period. Students should note that while a LOA temporarily suspends continuous enrollment requirements, it does not extend time for degree completion.

The LOA or medical LOA prevents registration for the approved LOA period. If the student wishes to return to academic study before the end of the approved LOA period, they should notify the Associate Dean for Graduate Education or their Graduate Program Director to request that the LOA be shortened and the registration hold removed.

If there is a delay in return beyond the approved LOA or medical LOS without written consent of the Associate Dean for Graduate Education, the student may be required to reapply for admission.

Reinstatement Process

Leave of Absence Reinstatement Process: When appropriate, the Associate Dean for Graduate Education or the relevant Program may establish specific requirements for reinstatement to prepare the student for a successful return to the university. Examples include, but are not limited to asking the student to complete preapproved course work at an outside institution to demonstrate readiness to return to rigorous academic work, or to participate in a

reinstatement consultation with Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, Division for Academic Success, University Student Health Services, or University Counseling Services. The student will be eligible to re-enroll the semester following the approved LOA provided all required conditions are satisfied. Students on leave can request to be reinstated before the end of their approved leave period by contacting their Program Director or the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Medical leave of absence reinstatement process: The student wishing to be reinstated must provide evidence to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education of their readiness to return. This includes documentation from a qualified health care professional who treated the student during their leave. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education, in conjunction with the relevant Program, Advisor and other VCU personnel/offices as necessary, will review the evidence and determine whether the student is ready to return to their training.

Adapted from the VCU Bulletin. Students should see the VCU Bulletin for additional information.

Approved by the School of Medicine Graduate Programs Committee: August, 2019